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UNCLAS AMMAN 003388

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [JO](#) [UNHCR](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN HOPES UNHCR EXCOM MEMBERSHIP WILL THAW ITS
"FROZEN" DELIBERATIONS ON THE 1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION

REF: A. STATE 75462

[B](#). 00 AMMAN 4833

[1](#)1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified --
please protect accordingly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Refcoord delivered on April 28 ref A demarche Dr. Khalid Takhayneh of the Foreign Ministry's International Organizations Department. The demarche supported Jordan's application for membership in UNHCR's Executive Committee (EXCOM), and requested a briefing on GOJ views of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. While welcoming USG support for Jordan's EXCOM bid, Takhayneh argued that the GOJ could not table legislation to ratify the 1951 Convention at this time, given the strong opposition that exists within Parliament to admitting any additional Iraqi or Palestinian refugees. Takhayneh added that relations between the GOJ and UNHCR were strained, and that the Foreign Ministry believed UNHCR had "violated" articles in its 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which require it to find durable solutions for refugees within six months of their arrival in Jordan.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Asked about the inter-ministerial committee Jordan established in 2000 to consider accession to the 1951 Convention (ref B), Takhayneh said that the committee had been charged with reviewing several international protocols, and that work on the refugee conventions was currently "frozen," given that anti-terror legislation was a higher priority. When the 1951 Convention was under active consideration, Takhayneh said that the Interior Ministry had raised objections to provisions that grant refugees the right to work, and to Article 1.C, fearing that Palestinians who have been granted Jordanian nationality, but are considered refugees, might lose their refugee status. Takayneh promised to convey the USG request to consider signing the convention to senior Foreign Ministry officials, but noted that the MFA had already failed to persuade other ministries to consider signing on to the 1967 Protocol as an intermediate step. However, Takhayneh welcomed any background information the USG could provide on implementing legislation other signatories from the region have adopted as potential future fodder.

[1](#)4. (SBU) At an April 26 farewell event hosted by post, UNHCR Jordan Rep Sten Bronee told refcoord that UNHCR had abandoned its efforts to press Jordan to ratify the 1951 Convention in favor of "more realistic" options. He explained that UNHCR calculates that the best commitment it can secure from Jordan at this time is new domestic legislation that would replicate the protection and procedural principles contained in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, but avoid any discussion on the right of return by being "less specific on Article 1.C, and avoiding signing on to Article 1.D altogether." (NOTE: At the field level, UNHCR does not appear to share our interpretation that Article 1.D does not apply to persons who are receiving protection or assistance from UNRWA. In an April 28 telcon, UNHCR Jordan Senior Protection Officer Jacqueline Parleveliet argued that UNRWA does not/not currently provide protection to Palestinian refugees in the region. END NOTE.)

HALE